



Mini-Grant Program Information

For July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

Mini-Grant proposals are accepted
by the Department of Agriculture at any time.

Refer Any Questions to:

Montana Growth Through Agriculture Program
Montana Department of Agriculture
PO Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620-0201
406-444-2402
GTA@mt.gov

Legal Authority:

MCA Sections 90-9-102 & 90-9-401 (Montana Code Annotated)



State of Montana
Department of Agriculture
AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
AGRICULTURE MARKETING & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
Montana Growth Through Agriculture Program

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Program Information

How the Program Works	Page 1
Deadlines for Application Submission	Page 1
What Qualifies	Page 2
General Criteria for Funding	Page 2
Eligible Projects	Page 2
Eligible Costs	Page 2
Matching Funds	Page 3
Who Can Apply	Page 3
How to Apply	Page 3
How Projects are Selected	Page 4
Selection Criteria	Page 4
Award Process	Page 4
Reporting Requirements for Funded Projects.....	Page 4
Other Considerations	Page 5
Ownership and Publication of Materials.....	Page 5
Liability.....	Page 5
Confidentiality	Page 5
Rights of Agriculture Development Council	Page 5
Agriculture Marketing and Business Development Bureau Contact List	Page 6

Program Information

The Growth Through Agriculture Mini-Grant Program (Mini-Grant Program) is a branch of the Montana Growth Through Agriculture Program and was authorized by the 2009 Montana Legislature to encourage economic and agricultural development through educational, promotional, marketing, travel and other business activities.

The Agriculture Development Council delegated the administration of the Mini-Grant Program to the Department of Agriculture. However, the Montana Agriculture Development Council is ultimately responsible for the Program.

Goal: Strengthen and diversify Montana's agricultural industry

The Mini-Grant Program works to strengthen and diversify Montana's agricultural industry. Through small grants, the program assists in the development of innovative agricultural products and processes to add value to the agriculture industry, create new jobs, and expand small business opportunities.

How the Program Works

Public and private entities and organizations, business and industry, educational institutions, local governments and individuals are eligible to submit applications for funding to the Department of Agriculture. A review panel comprised of Department staff with expertise in agricultural marketing and business development evaluates the applications and makes recommendations to the Director of Agriculture as to funding that should be awarded to eligible projects.

Generally, to qualify for consideration, proposals must have practical, near-term relevance involving education, promotion, marketing, travel or other business related expenses that will stimulate expanded agricultural development, economic activity and employment growth.

The maximum grant amount for any single application is \$2,500. However, individual grants are generally limited to \$1,000 due to the highly competitive nature of the program and its limited available funding. Projects are limited to two awards. Any current Growth Through Agriculture Program recipient will be considered ineligible for a Mini-Grant award in addition to an award already received for the same proposed project activities. Coincidental awards (both Growth Through Agriculture Program and Mini-Grant Program) will only be considered on a case by case basis.

A rejected or partially funded proposal will be considered ineligible for mini-grant funding unless the Council approves such action.

Deadlines for Application Submission

Completed Mini-Grant Program applications may be submitted to:

Montana Growth Through Agriculture Program
Montana Department of Agriculture
PO Box 200201

Helena, MT 59620-0201

There are no set deadlines for Mini-Grant Program applications. Applications for the Mini-Grant Program will be accepted on an ongoing basis as long as funding is available. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Program Manager at 406-444-2402 for any additional information, including the status of funding availability.

Department of Agriculture staff members are available to review and provide feedback on draft applications.

What Qualifies

General Criteria for Funding

The Department of Agriculture may make a mini-grant award if it determines that the project is consistent with the goals of the Growth Through Agriculture Act and:

- 1) primarily adds value to Montana's agricultural products,
- 2) has the prospects for commercial success given current personnel, experience and resources of the applicant,
- 3) has the prospects to create and/or retain jobs in Montana,
- 4) primarily processes or adds value to Montana's agricultural products currently produced or potentially produced in the state, and
- 5) has the management structure to allow the Agriculture Development Council to reasonably conclude that the applicant will comply with ongoing reporting and monitoring activities.

Eligible Projects

In order to be eligible for the program, projects must embody the purpose of the Growth Through Agriculture Act. Projects must strengthen and diversify Montana's agricultural industry and assist the development of innovative agricultural business organizational improvements and the commercialization and marketing of new agricultural products in order to keep pace with a transforming agricultural industry and to create new jobs and expand small business opportunities.

Eligible Costs

Eligible costs under the Growth Through Agriculture Program include, but are not limited to:

- Education,
- Promotion,
- Marketing,
- Travel and
- Other business expenses related to agricultural development.

*** Growth Through Agriculture funding cannot be provided for activities completed prior to funding approval of the project. However, on a case by case basis, project costs incurred within one year of contract execution may be approved to meet matching funds requirements. ***

Other eligible costs can rarely include salaries and wages. **Program funds cannot be used for the payment of institutional overhead or other indirect costs.** These costs

may be used as in-kind matching contributions from the applicant. In no case can funds be used for political purposes.

Matching Funds

For the purposes of the Mini-Grant Program, matching contributions are funds directed toward completing the project, which are from private, federal, state or commodity check-off sources, **in an amount that is at least equal to the Mini-Grant Program funds requested for the project.** Matching contributions may not include other state grants. Matching contributions may be provided in the form of cash, in-kind services, indirect or overhead costs, or a combination of the above. Matching contributions may be provided by the project sponsor or by other supporter(s), and must be contributed as a direct result of the project, not as a result of normal day-to-day operations.

Who Can Apply

Proposals for funding are accepted from:

- Individuals
- Businesses and Industry Organizations
- Public and Private Agencies and Organizations
- Educational Institutions
- Local Governments

Any applicant organizations other than Sole Proprietorships must be registered with the Montana Secretary of State prior to submittal of the GTA application. Any application from an organization that is not registered with the Montana Secretary of State will not be accepted.

Two or more individuals or organizations may propose to conduct a project jointly by submitting one application as co-applicants.

Applicants must demonstrate a proven ability to carry out all elements of the proposed project. In addition, applicants proposing to rely upon the expertise of another individual or organization to undertake any part of the project must clearly define the responsibilities of that party as well as provide evidence of that entity's willingness and demonstrated ability to undertake that area of responsibility.

How to Apply

Please refer to the "Mini-Grant Program" section of the Growth Through Agriculture Program webpage for application procedures.

The application should provide members of the review panel with sufficient information including copies of any cost quotes to determine that the proposed activity utilizes a sound approach, is cost efficient, enhances agricultural economic activity and development as outlined in the application, and merits financial support. Proposals will be judged principally on adherence or conformity to the objectives and criteria indicated

and appropriate rules and statutes. Funding decisions will generally occur 4-6 weeks from receipt of a final application.

How Projects are Selected

The review panel will evaluate project applications as they are submitted and will make recommendations to the Director of Agriculture as to which projects should be funded. Successful projects are funded through contractual agreements that outline each party's responsibilities.

Selection Criteria

Selection of successful projects is a competitive process. All applications will be evaluated based on the degree to which each application addresses the Criteria for Funding listed above.

In addition, all proposals must include sufficient information to allow the above factors to be judged. Only those proposals that furnish complete information will be considered for evaluation. No partial proposals will be considered. The Montana Agriculture Development Council reserves the right to make a final selection or reject all proposals.

Award Process

Applicants selected for funding will be notified by telephone and/or in writing within one week of the award. If accepted by the applicant, a contract will be developed to define all project terms, conditions and responsibilities of the applicant. The contract will, in addition, clarify all legal patents and proprietary rights that will result from the proposed activity. The contract will incorporate the successful application among its provisions. Once the contract is reviewed and signed by all applicable parties, a check will be issued to the recipient as outlined by a payment schedule determined most appropriate by the review panel at the time of award.

Selected projects must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, licensing and regulations for funds to be awarded. Evidence of such compliance may be required before the grant check is issued.

Those whose applications were not chosen for funding will be notified in writing.

Reporting Requirements for Funded Projects

The Department of Agriculture reserves the right to determine the extent of reporting requirements, subject to modification over the course of the project. Interim reporting requirements will be based on the cost, duration and nature of the project. Typically, award recipients are required to submit a completed final report form that addresses the project activities and expenditures as well as a summary of the impacts of the project. The Department of Agriculture staff will be responsible for monitoring each funded project.

The recipient may be required to make an oral report at the conclusion of the project. The Department of Agriculture also requires the completion of follow-up surveys of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts.

Other Considerations

Ownership and Publication of Materials

All information and materials generated by the proposed activity become the sole property of the State of Montana. The grant recipient will retain the right to utilize, reprint and distribute all said information and materials.

Liability

The Montana Agriculture Development Council will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation of and production of a proposal or for any works performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

Confidentiality

All written materials developed for project as a result of a grant and /or documents submitted to the Department, shall be considered public except any information in which there is a privacy interest and that interest and the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure of the personal, financial, and business information contained therein. If an applicant/funding recipient deems a document to be confidential, please contact program staff to discuss.

Rights of Agriculture Development Council

The Agriculture Development Council reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals received.
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and concurrence of applicant.
- Clarify the scope of this application, within the program requirements and with appropriate notice to all applicants, to best serve the interests of the State of Montana.
- Amend the application's specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to all potential applicants.
- Require a good faith effort on the part of the project sponsors to work with the Council and the Department of Agriculture.
- Request a credit report, recent tax filing, or financial statement to clarify program eligibility.

Agriculture Marketing and Business Development Bureau

Contact the Agriculture Marketing and Business Development Bureau staff at (406) 444-2402 or by e-mail at gta@mt.gov for assistance on your business and marketing needs.

Collin Watters ***Bureau Chief***

Overall marketing, business development and oversight

Angie Nelson

Growth Through Agriculture Program Manager

Growth Through Agriculture program administration

Chad Lee

Business Development Officer

Business Assistance

Nancy Matheson

Special Projects Coordinator

Special project development and implementation

Linda Howard

Marketing Officer

International agricultural product marketing

Marty Earnheart

Marketing Officer

Meats & livestock marketing

Angelyn DeYoung

Marketing Officer

Domestic agricultural product marketing

Lindra Davies

Marketing Technician

Growth Through Agriculture program/marketing coordination

Services and Support Available

With a full staff, each focused on a particular area in the business of agriculture, the Department's Marketing and Business Development Bureau is well equipped to assist you in meeting the needs of your agribusiness. We will:

- Assist in the gathering of resources needed to develop and capitalize your venture.
- Provide valuable contacts in your industry or related industries.
- Serve as a liaison or matchmaker to develop a relationship with organizations new to your operation.
- Assist businesses entering new markets or working to expand your market share in existing markets.